**University of Georgia Cooperative Extension is working hard for its constituents. The following are examples of Extension’s impact in the county over the past year.**

**4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

The consistent, enduring presence of a caring adult in a young person’s life can be the difference between staying in school or dropping out; making healthy decisions or engaging in risky behaviors; realizing one’s potential or failing to achieve one’s dreams. Mentors can make a profound difference in the lives of their mentees and, in turn, strengthen our communities. Bryan County 4-H began a mentoring program to pair successful Bryan County 4-H Teen Leaders and at-risk youth. The goal of the Bryan County 4-H Mentor/Mentee Program is to expose at-risk youth to 4-H and mentoring, thereby increasing social competence in at-risk youth and helping reduce the likelihood that they will enter the juvenile justice system. Negative economic factors, such as high rates of poverty and unemployment, may potentially impact students enrolled in the program. Additionally, in Bryan County in particular, the program is reaching out to youth from military families with targeted support for these youth and families.

As a result of the program, 68 percent of mentees had a marked improvement in social skills and 55 percent of mentees said that their communication with their parents had improved.

**AGRICULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

The Bryan County Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) program offers soil, water, tissue and forage tests that can be handled through the local Extension office. The ANR agent has consulted with many clients on the results of these tests to improve the quality of life and growing conditions throughout Bryan County. Bryan County ANR also provides residents with a wide variety of free publications related to an array of residential and agriculture-related topics. In 2018, Bryan County Extension processed 470 soil, 13 water, 11 forage, five plant tissue, one nematode and six microbiology samples. In an effort to improve the quality of landscapes in Bryan County, the ANR program has also continued weekly consultations with landscape professionals and homeowners targeting poor practices currently in place.

Agriculture is still alive in Bryan County, however the quality of forages and hay fields have steadily declined over the last 10 to 15 years. In particular, hay producers struggle with controlling weeds due to the use of outdated practices, and cattle producers balance the health of their herds in relation to the quality of forage produced. In response, Bryan County ANR and the UGA Extension GrassMasters program are tasked with providing valuable information for growers in Bryan County. The Bryan County ANR program utilized this concept to implement a seven-week class to increase the educational foundation of all producers. The program saw 12 members graduate. Producers will be able to offer a more valuable product as a result of this training.

**FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES**

Although Bryan County does not have a Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) agent based in the county Extension office, we strive to assist local residents with their questions. Common questions cover food safety, food preservation, dealing with mold and mildew, healthy meal planning, nutrition, family budgeting, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP–Ed) resources, and more. These issues and others are answered through a wide variety of free UGA Extension publications available at the county office and phone conferences with FACS agents from surrounding counties. Neighboring FACS agents often conduct programming that our county residents are welcome to attend. Our office provides information about programming in surrounding counties.
Agriculture & Natural Resources
Goods and services related to Georgia’s agriculture and natural resources affect each of the state’s communities every day. Agriculture is Georgia’s largest industry, and its direct and indirect economic impact totals $73.7 billion. More than 392,400 Georgia jobs are directly involved in commodity or food- and fiber-related industries.

UGA Extension faculty and staff play a key role in the success of this industry by sharing university-based research for Georgians to use on the farm and at home. Recommendations in areas including soil fertility, pest management, plant and crop varieties, water quality, and herd health and management focus on maximizing production and profits while minimizing environmental impacts.

Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension agents also provide homeowners and communities with information on lawn care, landscaping, gardening and water conservation through a variety of workshops. Some agents also work with schools on projects like community gardens and farm-to-school programs. Georgia Master Gardener Extension Volunteers give thousands of hours of service to their communities by answering questions in county offices and creating educational opportunities.

4-H Youth Development
As the youth development program of UGA Extension, 4-H is also part of a national network. Georgia 4-H reaches more than 170,000 fourth- through 12th-grade students across the state and helps students develop the knowledge, life skills and attitudes that will enable them to become self-directing, productive and contributing members of society. This mission is fulfilled through hands-on learning experiences in agricultural and environmental awareness, leadership, communication skills, citizenship, energy conservation, health, and food and nutrition.

Georgia 4-H’ers are well-known for sharing their knowledge and volunteering throughout their communities. At the school and county levels, students participate in club meetings organized by 4-H Youth Development Extension agents. At the state level, students participate in competitions, summer camps and conferences. Some 4-H competitions and events are also offered at the regional and national levels.

Research indicates that, as a result of participating in 4-H, members are more engaged in their academic studies, less likely to be involved in risky behavior, and more likely to graduate from high school and continue their education.

Family & Consumer Sciences
Family and Consumer Sciences Extension specialists, agents and staff assist in addressing real-life issues faced by Georgians of all ages. They provide programs and the latest information on obesity, chronic disease, food and financial insecurity, family stresses, unhealthy housing, food safety and preservation, nutrition and more.

To help promote the positive development and safety of preschool, school-aged and adolescent youth, UGA Extension offers resources for parents, caregivers and others. Extension professionals in this program area lead consumer economics trainings and programs such as ServSafe®, Relationship Smarts, and FRIDE, a parent and teen driving education course.

Extension also promotes healthy lifestyles through statewide programs. Walk Georgia is a virtual, fitness-tracking resource that encourages physical fitness and healthy lifestyles to better the lives of Georgians. Other health programs managed by UGA include the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed). These classes teach families how to stretch their food dollars, eat healthier meals and snacks, and reduce the risk of foodborne illnesses.